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SUBJECT: IRAQ: EGYPT AND ARAB LEAGUE WELCOME FORMATION OF
NEW GOVERNMENT

REF: STATE 81632

¶1. (U) The Egyptian Foreign Ministry issued a public statement May 21 that welcomed the formation and approval of Iraq's new cabinet May 20. In the MFA's public statement, issued in the name of the Foreign Minister, Egypt called for the process of government formation to be completed via agreement on naming new Defense and Interior ministers. Similarly, Arab League Secretary General Amre Moussa - on the margins of the World Economic Forum in Sharm El Sheikh - told reporters he welcomed the agreement, calling the move a "step on the right path" in Iraq's political process. Moussa also pointed to an expected gathering in late June of Iraqi leaders at an Arab-League sponsored National Accord Conference in Baghdad as an opportunity to move the process of political reconciliation further along.

¶2. (U) Text of MFA statement on Iraq:

FM Abul Gheit welcomed the Iraqi Parliament's agreement to form a new Iraqi government under the premiership of Mr. Nouri Al-Maliki. Within the same context, Abul Gheit expressed confidence that all concerned Iraqi parties would reach agreement regarding the Minister of Interior and Minister of Defense positions, a decision which would allow the new Cabinet to shoulder its responsibilities and perform its missions and at the same time enable the Iraqi people to achieve their aspirations for security, stability, and prosperity. Abul Gheit stressed the importance of the Iraqi people's unity in face of terrorist acts and attempts by some to sow the seeds of sedition and sectarianism. He also emphasized the Egyptian people's solidarity with the people of Iraq and asserted that Egypt would never spare any efforts in extending assistance to them.

End text of MFA statement.
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